

Mentor panel examines drainage

■ Basins in city performing well overall, officials say

Betsy Scott

BScott@News-Herald.com

A cursory review of Mentor's 460 retention and detention basins tells city officials one thing: They aren't likely to blame for the water and sewer system backups residents have experienced this soggy spring.

A newly formed City Council Stormwater Committee perused past and present data about the basins this week in an ongoing effort to address drainage problems.

"The points of concern were large wet ponds in residential subdivisions," Engineer Dave Swiger said. "The question was asked 'Were they contributing to recent flood issues?' We don't feel they were, based on pre-

Documents online

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liminary assessment. The issue that remains is, as these ponds age, how will they be maintained and who's going to pay for it? Most of these are on private property."

Swiger shared with the committee a rundown of recommendations from a stormwater retention committee in 2001. Among them was a cost-sharing proposal.

At this point, the city can provide engineering advice to residents and homeowners associations on how to approach maintaining their basins, City Manager Ken Filipiak said.

"Council may wish to continue the discussion on the extent to which the city becomes involved in maintenance of these private drainage areas and would have to determine an appropriate way to assess that cost to the homeowners," he said. "In most cases, it's probably cheaper for homeowners associations to do it on their own."

Ward 3 Councilman Edward R. Walsh brought up the flooding on Route 306 and some other major streets following a storm on April 23. Swiger said the pump station was working, but was simply overwhelmed.

The detention and retention basin information was reviewed at the request of Councilman at large Scott Marn, who served on the 2001 committee.

"If you ask me, it's a basic city service," he said. "I believe this is part of infrastructure. ... We want to get

the water away from people's homes so their properties aren't damaged."

Earlier this month, the city and Lake County Department of Utilities performed tests in some condominium complex systems experiencing drainage issues.

Dye testing in basement drains at Bellflower Terrace didn't unearth any cross-connections, or pipes connected to the wrong sewer, Swiger said.

"We had some dye that didn't show up in either sewer," he said, adding that the information would be shared with the management company. "It could mean a disconnected pipe or a blockage. ..."

"There are many possible complications with an aging system, so we want to really understand the problem before we recommend a solution. You take one step at a time and eliminate possibilities as you move forward."